

Colleagues, teen aide save legislator's life

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Reported by Robbie Sherwood

A member of the House of Representatives suffered a possible heart attack and collapsed during a floor vote Monday afternoon but was revived by colleagues using CPR and an electronic defibrillator.

Rep. Ray Barnes, 69, was in stable condition Monday evening after paramedics rushed him to a Phoenix hospital. Doctors had not determined Wednesday night whether Barnes had suffered a heart attack.

Witnesses said that Barnes, R-Phoenix, had no pulse and was not breathing when fellow lawmakers, a teenage House page and a lobbyist used the defibrillator to shock his heart.

"They absolutely saved his life," Rep. Doug Quelland, R-Phoenix, said of the quick action of Barnes' colleagues, staff members and others.

One of those who quickly jumped in to help was 17-year-old Ashley Mazur, a House page from Peoria, who had recently learned life-saving skills as a certified nursing assistant.

"I saw a group of people, and I heard, 'He's down!' So I ran over," said Mazur, who has used her skills before while working in a nursing home. "I told people to move back if you don't know what you're doing."

She has been certified in CPR for six years and has been a certified nursing assistant for three months.

Mazur joined Republican Rep. Ted Carpenter, a retired Phoenix firefighter, and Republican Rep. Cheryl Chase a registered nurse, in performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and chest compressions on Barnes. Mike Williams, a lobbyist and former paramedic, noticed the din and also joined the life-saving effort, as did Rep. Colette Rosati, R-Scottsdale, who has worked as a nurse.

"The page, Ashley, she really knew what she was doing," said Rep. Steve Yarbrough, R-Chandler.

By the time Sen. Robert Cannell, D-Yuma, a doctor, got to the scene, the team had used the on-site defibrillator to shock Barnes. Cannell was instrumental in outfitting both the House and Senate with the defibrillators after Sen. Andy Nichols of Tucson died of a heart attack in his office in 2001.

"We had some good people there," Cannell said of the Barnes rescue. "I just stabilized his airway. I'm just glad because we got those defibrillators in after Andy Nichols died over in the Senate, and we've trained the staff here in CPR every year."

Barnes had been moving slowly but acting normally before the emergency, said Rep. John Allen, R-Phoenix, who sits nearby. Allen said he heard what sounded like snoring coming from Barnes and thought the lawmaker was joking. But he quickly realized it was no joke and called 911 when Barnes wouldn't respond.

It was the second serious medical emergency involving a lawmaker this year. In March, Sen. Marilyn Jarrett, a Republican from Mesa, died after suffering an aneurysm in her office.